

**Rep. David B. McKinley Opening Statement  
Environment Hearing – Recycling and Plastics  
June 30, 2022 @ 11:30 a.m. EST**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman for this follow-up hearing to our last hearing on recycling over two years ago. And thank you to our panelists. We all know solid waste is a problem, whether it's: Tires, Papers, Plastics, or Batteries. And it's been a problem for decades.

Government-led efforts to recycle generally started in the 60s. The government called for separate bins for paper, plastics, glass, and garbage on people's curbside. The government was trying to change human behavior. It hasn't worked well, has it? In fact, even after 60 years of government incentives America still only recycles 23% of its waste.

But once again, it looks like democrats want big government to step in, this time to ban plastics. For example, 2 of the 4 bills before us today call for a moratorium on any new environmental permits for plastics facilities, just one more step to banning them.

Mr. Chairman, shouldn't we just let the free market run its course? Its clearly worked for: Paper, Oil, Glass, and steel recycling. So why are we should treating plastics differently? Look, there are issues with recycling plastics like:

- The cost;
- The separation of plastics, they have different colors and chemistries, they don't mix; and
- Developing recycling facilities in rural America.

Just over 2 years ago this committee had a hearing on plastic waste and witnesses discussed the advancements being made in plastics recycling. So, I'm hoping that today our witnesses will provide us with an update on those advancements in biodegradable plastics and other innovations in recycling. That way we can tackle those issues, rather than just ban plastics. But let's look at the big picture.

Not everyone lives in Los Angeles, New York, or Chicago - cities with robust recycling programs. What are small, rural communities supposed to do? Just consider Hazard, Kentucky or Petersburg, Indiana. These are towns with 300-400

people. Forced with rising inflation and energy prices, should congress be imposing another increase on their cost of living?

Mr. Chairman, only in Washington do people think that we can legislate changes in human behavior. Recycling is certainly an issue and has been for 60 years. But the free market will tell you that banning plastics is not the solution. Thank you and I yield back.